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A Framework for Thinking About Oppression and Its Change[1]

Morton Deutsch[2]

This paper provides a framework for thinking about oppression and how to overcome it. It considers the value premise underlying the use of the term "oppression." It then discusses the nature of oppression, the forms it takes, and what keeps it in place. In its final two sections, it focuses on awakening the sense of injustice and the strategies and tactics for overcoming injustice.

KEY WORDS: oppression; change; conflict; power; terror; indoctrination; ideology; the oppressor–oppressed relationship; persuasion; violence; non-violence.

In this paper, my purpose is to provide a framework for thinking about oppression and how to overcome it. Oppression is, I believe, at the root of many of the most serious, enduring conflicts in the world today.

The paper is divided into the following sections. The first considers the value premise underlying my use of the term, "oppression." The second is a discussion of the nature of oppression. The third addresses the question, "What forms does

[1]An earlier version of this paper, entitled "Oppression and Conflict," was presented as a plenary address at the Annual meeting of the International Society of Justice Research in Skovde, Sweden on June 17, 2002. This paper was the starting point of an ongoing, informal seminar on social justice held at Teachers College, Columbia University. The other participants in the seminar included Peter Coleman, Michelle Fine, Beth Fisher-Yoshida, Janet Gerson, Eric Marcus, Susan Opotow, Ellen Raider, Esther Salomon, Janice Steil, and Melissa Sweeney. From the discussions of theory, research, and practice during the meetings of the seminar, emerged plans for a Conference on Interrupting Oppression and Sustaining Justice. Its aim was to stimulate interaction about overcoming oppression among scholars from different academic fields, social and political activists, and graduate students in different disciplines. The Conference took place on February 27 and 28, 2004 at Teachers College. This issue of *Social Justice Research* presents some papers that were prepared before the Conference (and revised afterwards) and some that emerged from the Conference. Other papers from the Conference can be found under the heading of IO&SJ at the website of the International Center for Cooperation and Conflict Resolution of Teachers College: http://www.tc.edu/icccr/.

[2]All correspondence should be addressed to Morton Deutsch International Center for Cooperation and Conflict Resolution, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, New York 10027; e-mail: md319@columbia.edu

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oppression take?" The fourth asks, "What keeps oppression in place?" The fifth addresses the awakening of the sense of injustice. The sixth provides a discussion of the strategies and tactics for overcoming oppression, which often involves violent conflict with groups in power. In the final section of my paper, I will discuss some nonviolent strategies and tactics for overcoming oppression.

My discussion will not focus on the different contexts in which oppression occurs, such as the family, work, education, and between ethnic, religious, and racial groups. Some of this is presented in other articles in this issue. There is also an excellent discussion of the different contexts of oppression in the book, *Social Inequality* (Neckerman, 2004), which presents extensive empirical data about inequality in various contexts.

THE VALUE PREMISE UNDERLYING MY USE OF THE TERM OPPRESSION

The use of such terms as "oppression" and "injustice" implies the existence of a violation of a value or set of values. In employing such terms, I am adhering to the values incorporated in *the Universal Declaration of Human Rights* adopted by the United Nations on December 10, 1948. I believe there are several central values underlying the Universal Declaration: *democracy*, *egalitarianism*, and *effective cooperation*. Democratic egalitarianism pervades the 30 articles of the Declaration. Effective cooperation among and within nations (i.e., among the individuals, groups, and institutions which comprise national and international groupings) is necessary to create the social, material, and environmental conditions that are conducive to democratic egalitarianism. Egalitarianism is expressed in the first sentence of the Preamble to the Declaration. "Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice, and peace in the world. . ."

In my book, *Distributive Justice* (Deutsch, 1985, pp. 41–42), I have written about equality and egalitarianism as follows:

> The concept of equality has been discussed extensively by moral and political philosophers (Berlin, 1955–1956; Tawney, 1964; McCloskey, 1966; Wilson, 1966; Benn, 1967; Pennock and Chapman, 1967; Oppenheim, 1968; Rawls, 1971; Dworkin, 1981a,b; Walzer, 1983). In the vast literature dealing with equality, it is defined in various ways. I shall not attempt to summarize or critically examine this literature. My sense of it is that advocates of equality and egalitarianism are primarily opposed to *invidious distinctions among people but do not assume that all distinctions are invidious. Invidious distinctions are ones that promote* (*1*) *generalized or irrelevant feelings of superiority–inferiority* (*if I am a better tennis player or more good-looking than you, I am superior to you as a person*); (*2*) *generalized or irrelevant status differences* (*if I am a manager and you are a worker in a factory, I should have a higher standard of living than you*); (*3*) *generalized or irrelevant superordinate–subordinate relations* (*if I am a captain and you are a private, I can order you to shine my shoes*); *or* (*4*) *the view that the legitimate needs and interests of some people are not as important or do not warrant as much consideration as those of other people* (*this may*

> *be because of my sex, race, age, national or family origin, religion, political affiliation, occupation, or physical handicap, or because of special talents or lack of talent*).
>
> From an egalitarian perspective, one is not making an invidious distinction and thus creating inequality when one recognizes, approves, applauds, honors, or shows appreciation of an unusually good performance, of a courageous action, or of a well-accomplished difficult task. Equality does not imply identical treatment of everyone without regard to particular circumstance. Honoring another's performance does not diminish those who are not honored unless they consider themselves to be in a competitive or zero-sum relationship; if they view themselves as part of a cooperative community, they are enhanced by another's honor. The insistence on treating people identically, without regard to circumstance, is a pseudo-egalitarianism, which often masks basic doubts or ambivalence about one's commitment to egalitarian values.

Egalitarianism is conducive to effective cooperation in that it promotes social harmony, which in turn promotes mutual aid and the efficient specialization of function in cooperative work. (See Deutsch (1990) for a discussion of the psychological consequences of different forms of social organization.)

Although cooperative democratic egalitarianism or the Universal Declaration of Human Rights does not imply that all individuals, groups, or categories of people are treated identically or have the same positions in society, it does imply that the material and social conditions that affect individual well-being are distributed so that there are not gross systematic disparities in the well-being, opportunities for human development, or the rights of people, individually or collectively. Of course, due to inadequate knowledge, there is considerable uncertainty and conflict about how to create a world which would actualize the values of the Universal Declaration.

In this paper, my discussion of forms of oppression assumes that systematic, large inequalities of the kinds described earlier are unjust. Some would challenge this assumption and assert that such inequalities are inevitable and inherent in human nature as well as in the social orders in animals and humans and that they also promote economic productivity. However, I have pointed out (Deutsch, 1985, pp. 40–41):

> if a cooperative system is oriented toward increasing its economic productivity, its rational tendency will be to allocate its economic functions and goods to use them effectively, but to allocate its rewards (consumer goods) according to need or equality (if more than a bare necessity is available). However, it is also suggested that inherent pathologies in the extension of economic values throughout a society or in the temptation to accumulate personal power may give rise to an equity principle that allocates economic rewards and political power as well as economic functions and goods to those who appear to contribute the most to the group. This equity principle, over the long run, is likely to be dysfunctional for groups, economically as well as socially. Economically, by allocating rewards and power disproportionately, it enables those who are in power to bias the system of allocation to perpetuate their disproportionate rewards and power even when they are no longer making relatively large contributions to the group's well-being. Socially, it tends to foster the introduction of economic values in all aspects of social life with a resultant loss to the quality of life. As Diesing has written: 'A person becomes alienated from his possessions and creations when he learns to regard them as utilities which have value because other people desire them; he becomes alienated from other people when they are perceived as

> competing with him for scarce goods; and he becomes alienated from himself when he sees his own values as a utility based on the desires of others' (1962, p. 93).

The fact that cooperative egalitarianism is found in many hunting–fishing–gathering societies, as well as more complex societies, indicates that oppressive inequalities are not a human inevitability (see Mead, 1937; Gil, 1998; Kemp and Fry, 2004). And Henry Levin's paper (in this issue) indicates that large cooperative, egalitarian enterprises are both more productive and more humane than their traditional counterparts, which reject cooperative ownership and management. I found similar results in my review of egalitarian systems in the laboratory as well as in the social world in my book, *Distributive Justice* (Deutsch, 1985). I also note that anthropological reviews of peaceful societies indicate such societies are mainly cooperative and egalitarian (see Howell and Willis, 1989; Kemp and Fry, 2004; Encyclopedia of Selected Peaceful Societies, 2005, at www.peacefulsocieties.org).

WHAT IS OPPRESSION?

Oppression is the experience of repeated, widespread, systemic injustice. It need not be extreme and involve the legal system (as in slavery, apartheid, or the lack of a right to vote) nor violent (as in tyrannical societies). Harvey (1999) has used the term "civilized oppression" to characterize the everyday processes of oppression in normal life. Civilized oppression "is embedded in unquestioned norms, habits, and symbols, in the assumptions underlying institutions and rules, and the collective consequences of following those rules. It refers to the vast and deep injustices some groups suffer as a consequence of often unconscious assumptions and reactions of well-meaning people in ordinary interactions that are supported by the media and cultural stereotypes as well as by the structural features of bureaucratic hierarchies and market mechanisms" (Young, 1990, p. 41).

We cannot eliminate this structural oppression by getting rid of the rulers or by making some new laws, because oppressions are systematically reproduced in the major economic, political, and cultural institutions. While specific privileged groups are the beneficiaries of the oppression of other groups, and thus have an interest in the continuation of the status quo, they do not typically understand themselves to be agents of oppression.

WHAT FORMS DOES OPPRESSION TAKE?

I consider here five types of injustices that are involved in oppression: distributive injustice, procedural injustice, retributive injustice, moral exclusion, and cultural imperialism. To identify which groups of people are oppressed and what forms their oppression take, each of these five types of injustice should be examined. For a comprehensive discussion of social psychological research related to the topics discussed later, see Tyler *et al*. (1997).

Distributive Injustice

Under this section, I shall briefly consider the distribution of four types of capital (Perrucci and Wysong, 1999)—consumption, investment, skill, and social capital.

Consumption capital is usually thought of as "standard of living." It includes income as well as job and financial security and the amounts and types of food and water, housing, clothing, physical security, health care, education, sanitation, physical mobility (such as travel), recreation, and services that are available to members of a group. Clearly, there are gross differences in income and standards of living among the different nations, among the different ethnic groups within nations, among the different classes, and between the sexes. For example, compare Sudan with Canada, African-Americans with Euro-Americans, employees of General Motors and its executives, females and males.

Sen, for example (in Sen and Drèze, 1999, chapter 7, p. 140, in the book titled "India, Economic Development, and Social Opportunity") writes: "women tend in general to fare quite badly in relative terms compared to men, even within the same families. This is reflected not only in such matters as education and opportunity to develop talents, but also in the more elementary fields of nutrition, health, and survival." He estimated that there are "more than a hundred million missing women," in Asia and North Africa, as a result of the unequal deprivations they suffer, compared to men. In other words, the survival rates of women compared to men is considerably lower than could be expected when these are compared to the relative survival rates of men and women in Europe, North America, and sub-Saharan Africa where the differences in consumption capital available to males and females are not as unequal.

Investment capital "is what people use to create more capital" (Perrucci and Wysong, 1999, p. 10). Income is related to consumption capital and, also, wealth, which in turn, is related to investment capital. Generally, wealth is distributed more unequally than income. The inequalities among nations, within nations, among ethnic groups, among the social classes, between the physically impaired and unimpaired, and between the sexes are apt to be considerably greater with regard to investment than consumption capital. In 1998, in the United States, the top 10% of the population possessed 68.7% of the financial assets, while the bottom 90% had only 31.3% (Scholz and Levine, 2004), and this discrepancy has undoubtedly increased since then.

Skill capital is the specialized knowledge, social and work skills, as well as the various forms of intelligence and credentials that are developed as a result of education and training and experiences in one's family, community, and work settings. As Perrucci and Wysong (1999, p. 14) point out: "The most important source of skill capital in today's society is located in the elite universities that provide the credentials for the privileged class. For example, the path into corporate law with six-figure salaries and million-dollar partnerships is provided by about

two-dozen elite law schools where children of the privileged class enroll. Similar patterns exist for medical school graduates, research scientists, and those holding professional degrees in management and business. People in high-income and wealth-producing professions will seek to protect the market value not only for themselves, but also for their children, who will enter similar fields." It is evident that those in non-privileged groups in many societies will have much less opportunity to enter elite universities and to acquire the skills and credentials which would have high market value.

Social capital is the network of social ties (family, friends, neighbors, social clubs, classmates, acquaintances, etc.), which can provide information and access to jobs and to the means of acquiring the other forms of capital, as well as emotional and financial support. It is the linkage that one has or does not have to organizational power, prestige, and opportunities. The social capital that one can acquire and maintain is affected by such factors as one's family, social class, membership in particular ethnic and religious groups, age, sex, physical disability, and sexual orientation. In most societies, the ability to acquire and maintain social capital by those who are underclass or working class, disabled, elderly, members of minority, ethnic, religious or racial groups, or women is considerably more limited than the dominant groups. Personality, undoubtedly, also plays a role: one could expect that individuals who are ambitious, sociable, intelligent, and personally attractive will acquire more social capital than will those who are not.

To sum up this section on distributive justice (Deutsch and Coleman, 2000, p. 56): "Every type of system—from a society to a family—distributes benefits, costs, and harms (its reward systems are a reflection of this). One can examine the different forms of capital (consumption, investment, skill, social) and such benefits as income, education, health care, police protection, housing, and water supplies, and such harms as accidents, rapes, physical attacks, imprisonment, death, and rat bites, and see how they are distributed among categories of people: rich versus poor, males versus females, employers versus employees, Whites versus Blacks, heterosexuals versus homosexuals, police officers versus teachers, adults versus children. Such examination reveals gross disparities in distribution of one or another benefit or harm received by the categories of people involved. Thus, Blacks generally received fewer benefits and more harm than Whites in the United States. In most parts of the world, female children are less likely than male children to receive as much education or inherit parental property, and they are more likely to suffer from sexual abuse."

Procedural Injustice

In addition to assessing the fairness of the distribution of outcomes, individuals judge the fairness of the procedures that determine the outcomes (see Lind

and Tyler, 1988, for a comprehensive discussion of procedural justice). Research evidence indicates that fair treatment and procedures are a more pervasive concern to most people than fair outcomes. Fair procedures are psychologically important because they encourage the assumption that they give rise to fair outcomes in the present and will also in the future. In some situations, where it is not clear what "fair outcomes" should be, fair procedures are the best guarantee that the decision about outcomes is made fairly. Research indicates that one is less apt to feel committed to authorities, organizations, social policies, and governmental rules and regulations if the procedures associated within them are considered unfair. Also, people feel affirmed if the procedures to which they are subjected treat them with the respect and dignity they feel is their due; if so treated, it is easier for them to accept a disappointing outcome.

Questions with regard to the justice of procedures can arise in various ways. Let us consider, for example, evaluation of teacher performance in a school. Some questions immediately come to mind: Who has "voice" or representation in determining whether such evaluation is necessary? How are the evaluations to be conducted? Who conducts them? What is to be evaluated? What kind of information is collected? How is its accuracy and validity ascertained? How are its consistency and reliability determined? What methods of preventing incompetence or bias in collecting and processing information are employed? Who constitutes the groups that organize the evaluations, draw conclusions, make recommendations, and make decisions? What roles do teachers, administrators, parents, students, and outside experts have in the procedures? How are the ethicality, considerateness, and dignity of the process protected?

Implicit in these questions are some values with regard to procedural justice. One wants procedures that generate relevant, unbiased, accurate, consistent, reliable, competent, and valid information and decisions as well as polite, dignified, and respectful behavior in carrying out the procedures. Also, voice and representation in the processes and decisions related to the evaluation are considered desirable by those directly affected by the decision. In effect, fair procedures yield good information for use in the decision-making processes as well as voice in the processes for those affected by them, and considerate treatment as the procedures are being implemented (Deutsch and Coleman, 2000, pp. 44–45).

One can probe a system to determine whether it offers fair procedures to all. Are all categories of people treated with politeness, dignity, and respect by judges, police, teachers, administrators, employers, bankers, politicians and others in authority? Are some but not others allowed to have a voice and representation, as well as adequate information, in the processes and decisions that affect them?

It is evident that those people and groups with more capital are more likely to have access to political leaders and to be treated with more respect by the police, judges, and other authority figures than those with less capital. Also, their ability to have "voice" in matters that affect them is considerably greater.

Retributive Injustice

Retributive injustice is concerned with the behavior and attitudes of people, especially those in authority, in response to moral rule breaking. One may ask: Are "crimes" by different categories of people less likely to be viewed as crimes, to result in an arrest, to be brought to trial, to result in conviction, to lead to punishment or imprisonment or the death penalty, and so on? Considerable disparity is apparent between how "robber barons" and ordinary robbers are treated by the criminal-justice system, between manufacturers who knowingly sell injurious products (obvious instances being tobacco and defective automobiles) and those who negligently cause an accident. Similarly, almost every comparison of the treatment of Black and White criminal offenders indicates that, if there is a difference, Blacks receive worse treatment.

Moral Exclusion

Moral exclusion is about who is and is not entitled to fair outcomes and fair treatment by inclusion or lack of inclusion in one's moral community. Albert Schweitzer included all living creatures in his moral community, and some Buddhists include all of nature. Most of us define a more limited moral community.

Individuals and groups who are outside the boundary in which considerations of fairness apply may be treated in ways that would be considered immoral if people within the boundary were so treated. Consider the situation in Bosnia. Prior to the breakup of Yugoslavia, the Serbs, Muslims, and Croats in Bosnia were more or less part of one moral community and treated one another with some degree of civility. After the start of civil strife (initiated by power-hungry political leaders), vilification of other ethnic groups became a political tool, and it led to excluding others from one's moral community. As a consequence, the various ethnic groups committed the most barbaric atrocities against one another. The same thing happened with the Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda and Burundi.

At various periods in history and in different societies, groups and individuals have been treated inhumanly by other humans: slaves by their masters, natives by colonialists, Blacks by Whites, Jews by Nazis, women by men, children by adults, the physically disabled by those who are not, homosexuals by heterosexuals, political dissidents by political authorities, and one ethnic or religious group by another.

When a system is under stress, are there differences in how categories of people are treated? Are some people more apt to lose their jobs, be excluded from obtaining scarce resources, or be scapegoated and victimized? During periods of economic depression, social upheaval, civil strife, and war, frustrations are often channeled to exclude some groups from the treatment normatively expected from others in the same moral community.

Moral exclusion "is perhaps the most dangerous form of oppression" (Young, 1990, p. 53). It has led to genocide against the Jews and gypsies by the Nazis, the Turkish genocide of the Armenians, the autogenocide by the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, the mass killings of the political opposition by the Argentinian generals, widespread terrorism against civilians by various terrorist groups, and the enslavement of many Africans, to mention only a few examples of the consequences of moral exclusion.

Lesser forms of moral exclusions and marginalization occur also against whole categories of people—women, the physically impaired, the elderly, and various ethnic, religious, and racial groups—in many societies where barriers prevent them from full participation in the political, economic, and social life of their societies. The results of these barriers are not only material deprivation but also disrespectful, demeaning, and arbitrary treatment as well as decreased opportunity to develop and employ their individual talents. For extensive research and writing in this area, see the work of Susan Opotow (1987, 1990, 1995, 1996a,b, 2001).

Cultural Imperialism

"*Cultural Imperialism* involves the universalization of a dominant group's experience and culture and establishing it as the norm" (Young, 1990, p. 59). Those living under cultural imperialism find themselves defined by the dominant others. As Young (op. cit) points out: "Consequently, the differences of women from men, American Indians or Africans from Europeans, Jews from Christians, becomes reconstructed as deviance and inferiority." To the extent that women, Africans, Jews, Muslims, homosexuals, etc. must interact with the dominant group whose culture mainly provides stereotyped images of them, they are often under pressure to conform to and internalize the dominant group's images of their group.

Culturally dominated groups often experience themselves as having a double identity, one defined by the dominant group and the other coming from membership in one's own group. Thus, in my childhood, adult African-American men were often called "boy" by members of the dominant White groups but within their own group, they might be respected ministers and wage earners. Culturally subordinated groups are often able to maintain their own culture because they are segregated from the dominant group and have many interactions within their own group, which are invisible to the dominant group. In such contexts, the subordinated culture commonly reacts to the dominant culture with mockery and hostility fueled by their sense of injustice and of victimization.

WHAT KEEPS OPPRESSION IN PLACE?

Here I consider other factors that that contribute to the maintenance of oppression: the superior power of the dominant group; the social production of

meaning in the service of legitimating oppression; the self-fulfilling prophecies arising from oppression; and the distorted relationship between the oppressed and the oppressor.

The Superior Power of the Oppressor

Elsewhere, I have discussed different forms of power (Deutsch, 1973), as have many others. Here, I am focusing on "competitive" power: the power to control, dominate, or exploit another person, group, or nation whose power is not sufficient to prevent such domination or exploitation rather than on "cooperative" power: where it is to the benefit of each other if the other's power is enhanced. Such resources as wealth, status, size, weapons, intelligence, knowledge, organizational skill, internal unity, respect, affection, allies, and a reputation of being powerful are some of the bases of power. Effective power depends not only on the control or possession of resources to generate power but also upon the motivation to employ these resources to influence others, skill in converting these resources to usable power, and good judgment in employing this power so that its use is appropriate in type and magnitude to the situation in which it is used.

It is evident that a group's possession of highly effective power increases its chances of getting what it desires. Therefore, one would expect that the members of high-power groups would be more satisfied with their groups and more intent on preserving the status quo than would members of low-power groups. Given this asymmetry in power and satisfaction, it also could be expected that pressures for change in the power relations is most apt to come from low-power groups. The question naturally arises: How do high-power groups use their power to prevent or contain such pressure from low-power groups?

There are several basic ways: *control over the instruments of systematic terror* and of their use; *control over the state*, which establishes and enforces the laws, rules, and procedures which regulate the social institutions of the society; *control over the institutions* (such as the family, school church, and media) *which socialize and indoctrinate people* to accept the power inequalities; and *interactive power* in which there are repeated individual behaviors by those who are more powerful, which confirm the subordinate status of those in low power. In addition, there are the *self-fulfilling prophecies* in which the behavior of the oppressed, resulting from their oppression, are used by the oppressor to justify the oppression; and the *distorted relation* between the oppressor and the oppressed.

Systematic Terror

As Sidanius and Pratto (1999, p. 41) xspoint out, in their excellent book *Social Dominance*, systematic terror can be official, semi-official, or unofficial. "*Official terror* is the public and legally sanctioned violence and threat of violence

by organs of the state toward members of a subordinate group" (as in the South African police toward Blacks during the Apartheid period). *Semi-official terror* is the violence or intimidation carried out by officials of the state but not legally sanctioned by the state (e.g., the death squads in Argentina composed of paramilitary organizations), while *unofficial terror* is perpetrated by private individuals from dominant groups, often illegally, with the tacit approval of public officials (as in the lynchings of African-American men accused of having sex with White women).

Systematic terror may not be necessary to keep a subordinated group in its place, if they think the social institutions controlled by the dominant group, as well as their daily interactions with its members, are tolerable. Or, it might be that their socialization and indoctrination by the social institutions controlled by the powerful, have led them to accept and internalize the values and ideology of the dominant group. Even so, a harsh, dominant group in a totalitarian society may find it expedient, as well as self-affirming, to keep salient the potential of systematic terror, through its occasional, arbitrary use to encourage the continued internalization of its values by the subordinate group and the toleration of the injustices it is experiencing.

Control Over the State

In a self-reinforcing cycle, the powerful in any society control the state and control of the state increases the power of those who control it. In the United States and other Western democracies, large corporations and wealthy individuals are the primary funders of political campaigns, political parties, and political candidates; they also own and control most of the mass media. Additionally, they provide the support for most of the private policy-planning network—the think tanks, research institutes, policy discussion groups, and foundations—which help to set the national policy agenda and to establish policy priorities (see Perrucci and Wysong, 1999, chapters 4 and 5 for a detailed discussion). The result of the foregoing is an immense bias in the political system favoring large corporations and the economically privileged in the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of the government. The effects of this bias are evidenced in which groups experience the various forms of injustice described earlier in this paper. In the United States, it is apparent that such minorities as African-Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans, the physically impaired, single mothers, and children have relatively little power and are more likely to be poor and to suffer the other injustices associated with poverty. At the global level, a similar process occurs: the large multi-national corporations, the more powerful nations, and wealthy investors are able to influence the processes and practices affecting international trade, aid, and investment to their own advantage and, often, to the detriment of the people in third-world states.

Control Over Socialization and Indoctrination

The development of discontent among the disadvantaged and outrage among the oppressed are often aborted by the socialization and indoctrination institutions of society. The family, school, religious institutions, and the media socialize and indoctrinate the oppressed to obey authority and to keep them aware that punishment for disobedience will be severe, to view the disadvantages they suffer as legitimate, or to have faith that they will be compensated for them in the afterlife. The rewards and punishments in the here-and-now, as well as the afterlife, for acceptance or challenging authority and the status quo are presented vividly and repeatedly in both the myths and practices of the society and its indoctrinating institutions.

Interactive Power

This form of power has been defined by Harvey (1999, p. 43) as "the power to take the initiative in a relationship: in beginning or ending a relationship, and in insisting on its being modified, and in taking a number of communication initiatives like the power to begin or end a specific contact (like a conversation), to insist on being listened to and on being given answer to reasonable and pertinent questions." The socially privileged, typically, assume that they have the right to control the interactions in their relationship with members of subordinated groups. Challenging this assumption can be risky for a subordinate and, as a consequence, they usually go unchallenged. The repeated, everyday experience of being treated as an inferior produces a public image of being an inferior, which may be internalized as an image of self-inferiority. In the socially privileged, in contrast, such interactions will produce a public image of superiority and a corresponding self-image. Such non-egalitarian everyday interactions between the socially dominant and the oppressed help to keep the system of oppression in place by the public images and self-images they produce and perpetuate.

The Social Production of Meaning in the Service of Legitimating Oppression

Under this heading, we will provide some illustrations of how the various institutions of society and facets of its culture implicitly "proclaim the superiority of the oppressor's identity" (Noel, 1994, p. 7). The oppressors use "history," "the law of nature," "the will of God," "science," "the criteria of art," and "language" as well as the social institutions of society to legitimize their superiority and to ignore or minimize the identity of the oppressed.

Some illustrations (see Noel, 1994, for a more detailed discussion) follow:

- The Declaration of Independence starts with "We the People" but the "we" did not include Native Americans, slaves, women, or youths.

- "History," as it appears in the textbooks is mainly a series of events that involve "great men" such as conquerors, kings, presidents, or successful revolutionary leaders. They were the "winners;" the losers, if mentioned, are usually presented in a derogatory manner. The history of women, African-Americans, Native Americans, children, the aged, homosexuals, the physically challenged, and other minority groups are too insignificant to be noted except as problems.
- The pseudoscientific "Social Darwinism" eagerly misapplied such ideas as "survival of the fittest," "hereditary determinism," and "stages of evolution" to the relations between different human social groups—classes and nations as well as social races—to justify existing exploitative social relations and to rationalize imperialist policies. "The rich and powerful were biologically superior; they had achieved their positions as a result of natural selection. It would be against nature to interfere with the inequality and suffering of the poor and weak. Imperialism was patriotism in a race endowed with the genius for empire, for those superior peoples meant to lead inferior peoples" (Deutsch, 1973, pp. 102–103).
- All the large-scale religions share the belief in female inferiority (Noel, 1994). God, according to the Christian tradition, made man in *his* own image, while a woman is a mere reflection of man. In Hinduism, women are not even eligible for salvation; they must await another incarnation. In Islam, the testimony of a woman is worth only half that of a man. Everyday, the orthodox Jewish male thanks God "for not having made him a woman." According to Pope John Paul II, women are not allowed to be priests because this would be contrary to both their humanity and femininity.
- The behavioral and social sciences have often legitimized the oppressors' claim to superiority. Well-known psychologists have used the results of intelligence testing to proclaim that African-Americans, Jews, Eastern Europeans, and people from the Mediterranean area are inferior to Anglo-Saxons. Piaget and Kohlberg indicated that women have a less developed moral judgment than men. Sociologists (e.g., Banfield) have considered the lower classes to be pathological; anthropologists have employed the term "primitive" to characterize indigenous societies; psychiatrists have considered homosexuality to be a mental disease, women to suffer from "penis envy," and that children were fantasizing their abuses.
- The historians of art, music, and literature have much neglected the contributions of women and have frequently credited their works to men; "art" and "literature" are created by the dominators. African art is "primitive" art, even though copied by Picasso; "gays" write "homosexual" novels; and female film directors produce "women" movies. It has long been accepted for minority artists and performers to work in their own group's genre—for example, for blacks to create and perform jazz music. Only

recently have Blacks been permitted to express themselves in the higher "genres" of classical music, ballet, or opera.

The Contribution of Self-Fulfilling Prophecies to the Maintenance of Oppression

The myths of moral, intellectual, or motivational superiority of the oppressor, which often are used to legitimize the subordination of oppressed groups are typically supported by self-fulfilling prophecies. As Sidanius and Pratto (1999, p. 227) point out: "Societies are set up in ways that make life relatively easy for dominants and relatively difficult for subordinates." Subordinated groups are less likely to live in circumstances which encourage and stimulate the development of one's intellectual potential; which foster the motivation to be ambitious and to achieve economic success; which motivate conformity to the social norms against deviant and criminal behavior; which foster intragroup cohesiveness; and which contribute to the development of physical and mental health. These deficiencies resulting from oppression support the mythology and stereotypes promulgated by the oppressor and, in a self-fulfilling prophecy, enable the dominant to justify their oppression by characterizing the oppressed as being "dumb, lazy, or immoral."

Of course, there are oppressed groups who do not fit these stereotypes. Such groups, which have high intellectual and economic attainments as well as much intragroup cohesiveness, are often viewed as potential competitors. They are stereotyped as "cunning, deceitful, overly ambitious, and clannish." These groups tend to be morally excluded or marginalized so that they have only restricted or limited participation in the important institutions of society—political, legal, educational, etc. They tend to be segregated from the dominant group and their economic activities are primarily in stigmatized occupations and often they have to be very ambitious, cunning, and clannish to survive and thrive. As I have suggested elsewhere (Deutsch and Collins, 1951), these groups are seen as potential competitive threats to the dominant group and the responses to such threats often take the forms of intolerance, exclusion, or extermination.

The Distorted Relationship Between the Oppressed and the Oppressor

The Oppressed

Imagine the situation of an oppressed or abused child, wife, employee, or citizen. Each is in some critical way dependent upon the oppressor—the parent, the husband, the employer (company or organization), and the governing undemocratic power. Suppose the oppressed has needs or desires of which the oppressor strongly disapproves (e.g., physical affection, self-esteem, autonomy, self-determination) or only allows their expression in distorted dissatisfying,

self-abusive forms. The reaction of the oppressed is apt to be one of frustration → anger → anxiety if the oppressor indicates, even subtly, that the oppressed will be severely punished if the oppressed expresses her desires, frustrations, or anger. One way of reducing the anxiety aroused by the temptations to manifest the forbidden desires is to build an internal barrier to their expression by internalizing the threat through *identification with the oppressor* (Freud, 1937). Doing so leads, at one level, to guilt and self-hatred for having these desires. At a deeper level, it leads to guilt and self-hatred for abandoning one's self, as well as rage and a sense of moral superiority toward the oppressor who is responsible for this abandonment. As a result of these processes, submission and obedience to the oppressor, as well as depression, are commonly found among the oppressed when they are interacting with oppressors or when they are in oppressive situations.

However, it should be recognized that many who experience oppression in some aspects of their life do not necessarily experience it in other aspects, so that they are not necessarily submissive and depressed personalities racked by guilt, self-hatred, and rage in all situations. Damage to the personalities of oppressed people will be limited, even when exposed to pervasive oppression, if they are also part of a supportive, cohesive community whose values oppose oppression.

The Oppressor

If we were to examine the oppressors psychologically—the child abusers, the husbands who batter their wives, brutal bosses, and political tyrants—I believe that we would find that the oppressors need the oppressed. Their need to control and dominate the other, their intolerance of the autonomy of the other, makes them dependent upon having vulnerable, weaker others for the definition of their own power. Their own deep sense of vulnerability (anxieties about helplessness and impotence, guilt about forbidden desires and rage, self-hatred for vulnerability) leads to strong needs both to deny one's vulnerability (by projection of one's anxieties, guilt, and contempt onto others who are more vulnerable) and to have the power to control those who are vulnerable or can be made to be more vulnerable. The oppressor needs to be able to make demands, which are arbitrary and unreasonable so that the obedience of the oppressed is due to the oppressor's power and not to the agreement of the oppressed. The oppressor's intolerance of the autonomy of the oppressed is (Lichtenberg, 1990, p. 26) "neither idle nor freely chosen; it is a function of dependence on the vulnerable others for the definition of his or her own power." [3]

[3] Also, it should be noted that the social science literature on "quality-of-life" and "subjective well-being" indicates that there is a low contribution beyond the poverty level in advanced economies, of greater income to subjective well-being (Kahneman *et al*., 1999; Lane, 2000). The oppressors' drive for superior wealth, accompanied by conspicuous consumption, often impairs social relations, a key component of subjective well-being.

One can, of course, be more powerful in a relationship (such as a parent–child, employer–employee relationship) without being an oppressor. Power can be used "for" the other rather than "against" the other.

The Psychodynamic Relationship of the Oppressor and the Oppressed

There are structural similarities between the sadomasochistic and the oppressor–oppressed relationship. Each side of the relationship has some of the latent qualities of the other side: the sadist when he is whipping the masochist is also whipping himself; the oppressor when he is controlling the oppressed is controlling himself. The masochistic, when whipped, is also having the sadist within himself punished. Similarly, the oppressed who is being controlled is also having his rage controlled.

It seems obvious that not all oppressors have "oppressive" personalities nor do all the oppressed have "oppressed" personalities in the sense that they do not consistently prefer and seek out relationships where they can be the "oppressors" or the "oppressed." Nevertheless, I suggest that in any longstanding oppressive relationship, both the psychodynamics within its participants as well as social expectations will contribute to its persistence and resistance to change. Thus, in Afghanistan (despite the ending of the rule of the Taliban and their exposure to different models of family relationships on TV), many wives will continue to believe that their husbands have the right to beat them if they disobey them.

I conclude this section of my discussion by stating that any attempt to end long-enduring oppressive relations will have to address the psychodynamic issues which lead people to resist changing unhappy but familiar relationships. Some of the anxieties and fears that have to be addressed for the oppressed and oppressor are listed as follows:

1. Both feel anxious in the face of the unknown. They believe that they will be foolish, humiliated, or helpless, in a new unclear relationship.
2. Both fear the guilt and self-contempt for their roles in maintaining the oppressive relationship.
3. The oppressed fears that their rage will be unleashed; the oppressor is in terror of this rage.
4. Both fear punishment, if they change; the oppressed from the oppressor, the oppressor from the oppressed and other oppressors.
5. Both anticipate loss from the change: the oppressed will lose their sense of moral superiority and the excuses of victimhood; the oppressor will lose the respect and material benefits associated with being more powerful.

AWAKENING THE SENSE OF INJUSTICE

In this section, I shall consider the sensitivity to injustice in the victim and the victimizer. Awareness of injustice is a precondition for overcoming it. For a more extended discussion see Deutsch and Steil (1988).

The Differential Sensitivity to Injustice of the Victim and the Victimizer

Although it may be morally better "to be sinned against than to sin," it is generally accepted that the immediate pain is usually greater for the one who is sinned against than for the sinner. As I have indicated earlier, the victimizers—in addition to their gains from their exploitative actions—commonly have the reassurance of the official definitions of justice and the support of such major institutions as the church, the press, and the schools to deaden their sensitivities to the injustices inherent in their relations with the victim. The victim may, of course, be taken in by the official definitions and the indoctrination emanating from social institutions and, as a result, lose his sensitivity to injustice. Because he is the one who is experiencing the negative consequences of the injustice, he is also less likely to feel committed to the official definitions and indoctrinations because of his lack of participation in creating them.

The explanation of the differential sensitivity in terms of differential gains and differential power is not the complete story. There are, of course, relations in which the victimizer is not of superior power, and yet, even so, he will not experience guilt for his actions. Consider a traffic accident in which a car hits a pedestrian. The driver of the car will often perceive the accident so as to place responsibility for it upon the victim. Seeing the victim as responsible will enable the driver to maintain a positive image of himself. Projecting the blame onto the victim enables the victimizer to feel blameless.

If we accept the notion that most people try to maintain a positive conception of themselves, we can expect a differential sensitivity to injustice in those who experience pain, harm, or misfortune and those who cause it. If I try to think well of myself, I shall minimize my responsibility for any injustice that is connected with me or minimize the amount of injustice that has occurred if I cannot minimize my responsibility. On the other hand, if I am the victim of pain and harm, to think well of myself, it is necessary for me to believe that it was not my due: it is not a just dessert for a person of my good character. Thus, the need to maintain positive self-esteem leads to opposite reactions in those who have caused an injustice and those who suffer from it.

Although the need to maintain a positive self-regard is common, it is not universal. The victim of injustice, if he views himself favorably, may be outraged by his experience and attempt to undo it; in the process of so doing, he may have to challenge the victimizer. If the victimizer is more powerful and has the support

of the legal and other institutions of the society, the victim will realize that it would be dangerous to act on his outrage or even to express it. As I have indicated earlier, under such circumstances, in a process that Anna Freud (1937) labeled "identification with the aggressor," the victim may control his dangerous feelings of injustice by denying them and by internalizing the derogatory attitudes of the victimizer toward himself.

Conditions that Awaken and Intensify the Sensitivity to Injustice

In the preceding, I have suggested that the sense of injustice may be minimal in the oppressors and also in the oppressed under certain circumstances. Here, I wish to consider the conditions that awaken and intensify the sensitivity to injustice. The major explanatory theme advanced by social scientists for the sensitivity to injustice is that of *relative deprivation*: the perceived discrepancy between what a person believes she is entitled to and what she obtains regarding the different forms of justice described in the third section: distributive, procedural, retribution, moral inclusion, and cultural imperialism. It is commonly assumed that it is relative rather than absolute deprivation that is critical in stimulating dissatisfaction. Research (see Crosby, 1982, for an excellent summary) has demonstrated that people who are well off by absolute standards may feel more discontent than those who are much worse off if they feel relatively more deprived because their aspirations are high or they are surrounded by people who are even more well-off than they are.

Runciman (1966) made a distinction between two types of relative deprivation: egoistic and fraternal. *Egoistical* deprivation occurs when an individual feels disadvantaged relative to other individuals; *fraternal* deprivation occurs when a person feels his group is disadvantaged in relation to another group. An individual may feel doubly deprived: as an individual and as a group member. As Tajfel (1982) pointed out, the two kinds of deprivations have different implications for how an individual may improve his situation. To remedy fraternal deprivation, social change (change in the position of one's group) is necessary; to remedy egoistic deprivation, only change in one's individual situation is entailed.

The greater the magnitude of relative deprivation, the greater the sense of injustice that will be experienced by the oppressed. Members of the relatively advantaged group will be sensitive to the injustices experienced by the oppressed when they are aware that the oppressed are relatively deprived, that they are receiving less than their entitlement.

An individual's conception of what he and others are entitled to is determined by at least five major kinds of influence: (1) the ideologies and myths about justice that are dominant and officially supported in the society, (2) the amount of exposure to ideologies and myths that conflict with those that are officially supported and are supportive of larger claims for the oppressed, (3) experienced changes in satisfaction–dissatisfaction, (4) knowledge of what others who are

viewed as comparable are getting, and (5) perceptions of the bargaining power of the oppressed and oppressors.

The Influence of Ideologies and Myths

The official ideology and myths of any society help define and justify the values that are distributed to the different positions within the society; they codify for the individual what a person in his position can legitimately expect. Examples are legion of how official ideology and myth limit or enhance one's views of what one is entitled to. The American poor offer an instance of the potency of myth in creating an identity that promotes docility in the face of deprivation (Edelman, 1971). Americans are taught by their schools, the mass media, and their political rhetoric that America is the land of equal opportunity. Given such pervasive indoctrination, the poor are apt to attribute their condition to their own failings. This view of themselves as unworthy is further supported by cues from governmental practices toward them which place in question their morality, ambition, and competence. As a result, the poor in America have typically been meek and acquiescent, requiring less coercion and less in benefits than has been true in other developed countries. Similarly, the ideology and myth of White supremacy has led Whites to expect that they are entitled to deferential behavior from Blacks and Blacks to expect that they are not entitled to equal treatment from Whites. Similarly, men and women under the influence of a sexist mythology and ideology have defined gender entitlements that give the women supremacy in the narrow confines of the kitchen and the nursery, while men have supremacy in the broad world outside the home as well as in many areas within it.

The Weakening of Official Ideologies

It is difficult not to accept the official myths and ideology of one's society even if they are to one's disadvantage unless (1) there is a breakdown of consensual norms and the inability or unwillingness of the ruling elite to act in such a way as to restore these norms; this is likely to occur during a period of rapid social change or intrasocietal conflict, either of which could bring into question the legitimacy of traditional myths and values; (2) there is a failure of the society to deliver the entitlements that it has defined as legitimate for one's position so that the magnitude of one's relative deprivation is increased; this could be due to natural or social disasters that worsen the conditions of daily life; or (3) there is exposure to new ideologies and new examples that are accepted as legitimate by many people, which stimulate consciousness of new and better possibilities; this could happen as the result of increased communication arising from new technological developments such as books, newspapers, radio, and television, or it may reflect an increased urbanization and the resulting exposure to more diversity of people,

ideas, and experience. Obviously, one would expect that the receptivity to new ideologies and examples would be heightened by the breakdown of legitimacy of the existing ideology and the worsening of living conditions.

Experienced Changes in Satisfactions–Dissatisfactions

Modifications in the conception of what one is entitled to derive not only from alterations in the ideology and myths that one accepts but also from changes in one's experiences of satisfactions. A period of gain creates expectations about further improvement. As de Tocqueville in *L'Ancien Regime* commented: "Only a great genius can save a prince who undertakes to relieve his subjects after a long oppression. The evil, which was suffered patiently as inevitable, seems unendurable as soon as the idea of escaping from it is conceived" (1947, p. 186).

Many social scientists, before and after Tocqueville, have written insightfully about the "revolution of rising expectations" to explain the paradox that social discontent and even revolutionary activity is more likely to occur after social conditions have improved, when there is rising hope, not bleak despair. The explanation generally follows two major lines. First, improvement of social conditions increases aspirations by increasing what is perceived to be possible to attain. Demand may increase at a faster rate than the actual gains received, with a resulting increase in relative deprivation and in the sense of injustice. The increased discontent is most likely to occur if the gains are discontinued or reversed after the initial gains have heightened further expectations.

The second explanation of the effects of gains is that the increase is not uniform in all areas in which the victimized are disadvantaged. Improvement in one area, such as education, only makes one more sensitive to the injustice one is experiencing in other areas such as employment, police protection, and housing. Many social scientists have advanced the proposition that status disequilibrium (such that there are differences in one's relative statuses in income, education, social prestige, and the like) is a source of tension and discontent (e.g., Davies, 1962; Galtung, 1964; Himmelstrand, 1969). Thus, a very effective way of enhancing the sense of injustice of the victimized is to increase their education and little else.

Comparing Oneself to Others

Alterations in the conception of what one is entitled to result not only from changes in the level of satisfaction but also from modifications in one's views either about how comparable others are being treated or about who should be considered as comparable. There is considerable research evidence that one's attitude, one's evaluations of one's abilities, and one's emotions are very much influenced by one's perceptions of these attributes in others who are used for comparison purposes (see Pettigrew, 1967, for summary). Although the evidence

is by no means conclusive, it has been suggested by Festinger (1954), Gurr (1970), and others that comparison tends to be primarily with similar others, and Gurr further suggests that the comparison will be with the similar others whose gains are most rapid. Thus, if someone else who is perceived to be similar is already better off, then one will feel it is unjust, and if, in addition, the person advances rapidly in status, salary, or the like, one will experience a substantial increase in relative deprivation unless one receives a comparable increase. A potent way of arousing the sense of injustice is to make the victim more aware that comparable others are being treated better or to increase her feeling that it is appropriate to compare herself with others whom she previously considered to be incomparable to herself.

Increasing Bargaining Power

One's perceived power is undoubtedly a factor determining what one is entitled to and with whom one compares oneself to establish one's entitlements. If a victim or victimized group is dealing with an unresponsive exploitative group, it is faced with either the possibility of resigning into apathy and depression or attempting to increase its power sufficiently to persuade or compel the other to negotiate. Bargaining power is increased by either of two means: increasing one's own power or decreasing the other's power. Attempts to change power can be directed at altering the resources that underlie power (such as wealth, physical strength, organization, knowledge, skill, trust, respect, and affection), or it can be directed toward modifying the effectiveness with which the resources of power are employed.

The primary resources of the oppressed are the number of discontented people and the fact that they have justice on their side. The utility of people as a resource for power is a function of their *numbers*, their *personal qualities* (such as their knowledge, skill, dedication, and discipline), their *social cohesion* (as reflected in mutual trust, mutual liking, mutual values, and mutual goals) and their *social organization* (as expressed in effective coordination and communication, division of labor, and specialization of function, planning and evaluation). Numbers of people are obviously important but undoubtedly not as important as their personal qualities, social cohesion, and social organization. A large, inchoate mass of undisciplined, ineffectual people are at the mercy of a small, dedicated, disciplined, well-organized, cohesive group. Most large groups are controlled by less than 10% of their membership.

If one examines such low-power minority groups as the Jews, Chinese, and Japanese that have done disproportionately well in the United States and in other countries to which they have migrated, it is apparent that these groups have been characterized by high social cohesion and effective social organization combined with an emphasis upon the development of such personal qualities as skill,

dedication, and discipline. Similarly, the effectiveness of such guerilla forces as the Vietcong or such terrorist groups as Al Qaeda has been, in part, due to their cohesion, social organization, and personal dedication. Clearly, the development of these characteristics is of prime importance as a means of increasing the power of one's group.

Elsewhere (Deutsch, 1973), I have considered some of the determinants of cohesion. Here I add that groups become cohesive by formulating and working together on issues that are specific, immediate, and realizable. They become effectively organized as they plan how to use their resources to achieve their purposes and as they evaluate their past effectiveness in the light of their experiences. It is apparent that the pursuit of vague, far-in-the-future, grandiose objectives will not long sustain a group's cohesiveness. Nor will the exclusive pursuit of a single issue be likely to sustain a long-enduring group unless that issue proliferates into many sub-issues. Those intent upon developing social cohesion and social organization should initially seek out issues that permit significant victories quickly; they will set out on a protracted indeterminate struggle only after strongly cohesive and effective social organizations have been created.

So far, I have stressed personal qualities, social cohesion, and social organization as resources that can be developed by low-power groups to enhance their power. Typically, such resources are vastly underdeveloped in victimized groups; however, they are necessary for the effective utilization of almost every other type of resource, including money, votes, tools, force, and the like. Low-power groups often have two other key assets that can be used to amplify their other resources: discontent and the sense of injustice. If intense enough, these may provide the activating motivation and the continuing determination to change the status quo. They are the energizers for individual and social action to bring about change. Moreover, to the extent that the basis for discontent and the nature of the injustice can be communicated to others so that they experience it, if only vicariously, then supporters and allies will be attracted to the side of the low-power group. And increasing the number of one's supporters and allies is another important way of increasing one's power. Thus, in a circular way, bargaining power and the sense of injustice mutually reinforce each other: an increase in one increases the other.

Discontent and the sense of injustice may be latent rather than manifest in a subordinated group. Neither the consciousness of oneself as victimized or disadvantaged nor the consciousness of being a member of a class of disadvantaged may exist psychologically. If this be the case, consciousness-raising tactics are necessary precursors to the developing of group cohesion and social organization. The diversity of consciousness-raising tactics have been illustrated by the variety of techniques employed in recent years by Black power groups, women's liberation groups, and gay and lesbian groups. They range from quasi-therapeutic group discussion meetings through mass meetings and demonstrations to dramatic confrontations of those in high-power groups. It is likely that a positive consciousness of one's disadvantaged identity is most aroused when one sees someone,

who is considered to be similar to oneself, explicitly attacked or disadvantaged and sees him resist successfully or overcome the attack; his resistance reveals simultaneously the wound and its cure.

OVERCOMING OPPRESSION

Once the sense of injustice has been awakened, to change the oppressive relation there are basic strategies available: persuasion and power strategies. Each is discussed in the following sections.

Persuasion Strategies

These strategies are aimed at convincing those in high power to change so that power is shared more equitably and oppressive practices are reduced or eliminated. There are three main types: *appeals to moral values*; *appeals to self-interest*; and *appeals to self-realization*. For excellent discussions of the psychological processes involved in persuasion in conflict and negotiating situations, see Chaiken *et al*. (2000); for a systematic discussion of the multiple factors affecting attitude change, see Petty and Wegener (1998).

Appeals to Moral Values

These assume that the oppressor is not fully aware of the unjust situation of the oppressed and that if he were so, his conscience or moral values would move him to take action to remedy the situation. The appeals are aimed at both cognitions and affect so that the oppressor can understand how his moral values are being violated by the injustices and can feel sufficiently guilty or outraged to take action to eliminate the injustices. This sort of empathic understanding of the injustices experienced by various subordinated groups can be developed in many ways. The most effective way is by experiencing, directly or indirectly, what it is like to suffer the injustices. Indirect experiences would include conversations with members of an oppressed group about their life experiences; tutored role playing of being a member of such groups; reading autobiographies and novels, watching films and videos which dramatize and make emotionally vivid the experience of injustices; and hearing lectures and sermons which make salient the moral values being violated.

If the oppressor believes that he has the moral right to engage in oppressive practices (e.g., beating his wife when she disobeys him), then attempts to create empathic understanding of the situation of the oppressed is not likely to be successful. Here, what is needed is a moral authority (e.g., the legal system, religious authority, the consensus of his peers), which he accepts as superior to his own sense

of morality to persuade him that he is morally wrong. However, unfortunately in many situations, the powerful are not responsive to moral persuasion because the moral authority endorses the oppression or the oppressor is indifferent to moral claims.

Appeals to Self-Interest

Such appeals are often more effective for people who are embedded in an individualistic or competitive society. In such cases, the process of persuasion starts with the communicator's having a message that he wants to get across to the other. He must have an objective if he is to be able to articulate a clear and compelling message. Further, in formulating and communicating his message, it is important to recognize that it will be heard not only by the other but by also one's own group and by other interested audiences. The desirable effects of a message on its intended audience may be negated by its unanticipated effects on those for whom it was not intended.

I suggest that Acme's (the oppressed) message to Bolt (the oppressor), to be effective, should include the following elements:

(1) A clear statement of the specific actions and changes being requested of Bolt. Bolt should know what is expected of him so that he can fulfill Acme's expectations if he so desires. Presumably, Bolt is more apt to do what Acme wishes if Bolt believes that it is possible for him to do so. He is more likely to believe that this is the case if Acme's wants are perceived to be specific and limited rather than if they are viewed as vague and unbounded.

(2) An appreciation of the difficulties, problems, and costs that Bolt anticipates if he complies with Acme's wishes. Such an appreciation should be combined with an expressed willingness to cooperate with Bolt to overcome the difficulties and reduce the costs. This willingness entails a readiness on Acme's part to consider Bolt's proposals and counterproposals and to modify his own initial proposals so that a mutually responsive agreement can be reached.

(3) A depiction of the values and benefits that Bolt will realize by cooperating with Acme. In effect, if Bolt can be persuaded that he has more to gain than to lose by doing what Acme wants, obviously, he is more likely to do it. The important gains reside in the possibility that Bolt, sharing power with Acme, may enhance Acme's general cooperativeness and thus markedly increase Bolt's fulfillment of his own objectives. There are many instances in labor–management, student–faculty, and warden–prisoner relations that indicate that the more powerful party has gained enormously through enhancing the power (and thus sense of responsibility) of the weaker party. In addition, other dissatisfactions that Bolt has experienced in his relationship with Acme may be reduced by Acme's enhanced cooperativeness. Other

sources of potential gain for Bolt reside in the enhanced reputation and goodwill that he will obtain from influential third parties and in the greater fulfillment he will experience when Acme is content rather than dissatisfied with their relationship.

(4) A statement of the negative, harmful consequences that are inevitable for Bolt's values and objectives if Acme's wishes are not responded to positively. In effect, Bolt has to be led to understand the costs of nonagreement—so that he can realize that the costs of agreement are not the only costs to be taken into account. Potential costs for Bolt of a failure to come to an agreement include: the losses resulting from a decrease in Acme's future cooperativeness, including the possibility of Acme's total noncooperation; losses in esteem and goodwill; possibly the loss of cooperation of significant third parties; and losses due to active attempts to embarrass, harass, obstruct, or destroy the interests of Bolt by Acme or by his sympathizers.

(5) An expression of the power and resolve of Acme to act effectively and unwaveringly to induce Bolt to come to an acceptable agreement. Acme's unshakable commitment to induce a change may affect Bolt by convincing him that Acme's needs are serious rather than whimsical and thus deserve fulfillment. It may also persuade Bolt that the pressure from Acme will not diminish until an acceptable agreement has been reached. However, if Bolt has no concern whatsoever for Acme's needs and no belief that Acme's pressure will be sufficiently strong to be disturbing, Acme must attempt to develop, mobilize, and publicize its power sufficiently to convince Bolt that negotiation would be a prudent course of action.

A message that contains the elements mentioned earlier strongly commits Acme to his objective yet suggests that the means of attaining it are flexible and potentially responsive to Bolt's views. Because the objective is articulated so as to be specific and limited, it is more likely to be considered by Bolt as feasible for him to accept than is one stated in more generalized and grandiose terms. The message provided Bolt with the positive prospect that changes will result in enhanced social and self-esteem and will yield the benefits to be derived from increased cooperation from Acme. It also indicates the negative results to be expected from lack of change. Although Acme's firm intent to alter the status quo is made evident, his stance throughout is cooperative. The possibility of a true mutual exchange is kept open with explicit recognition that the dissatisfactions and the problems are not one-sided.

Appeals to Self-Realization

These are, also, involved in appeals to self-interest. But here, I am more specifically referring to the distortions of self that are involved in the distorted

relationship between the oppressor and the oppressed. As Lichtenberg (1990, pp. 191–192) asks: ". . . if the rich are doing so well why aren't they happy? Why is there so much alcoholism among the power elite, so much drunkenness, so much attachment to non-essentials, like 'pinstripes on one's Mercedes"'?

For the oppressor to attain an undistorted self, Lichtenberg (1990) suggests that, not only must he withdraw from the processes of domination, he must re-own and resolve his feelings of vulnerability, guilt, and self-hatred, his rage and terror, and to undo the projection of these feelings onto the oppressed. How can the oppressor be helped to this self-realization? Psychologists, in their roles as psychotherapists, marriage counselors, organizational consultants, and educators have a role to play in demystifying the psychological processes involved in the dominators. So, too, I believe do the oppressed, by not accepting their distorted roles in the distorted relationship of the oppressor and the oppressed.

Difficulties that Interfere with the Use of Persuasive Messages by Low-Power Groups

Rage or fear in the low-power group often make it impossible for the members of that group to communicate persuasive messages of the sort described earlier. Rage leads to an emphasis on destructive, coercive techniques and precludes offers of authentic cooperation. Fear, on the other hand, weakens the commitment to the steps necessary to induce a change and lessens the credibility regarding the idea that compliance will be withdrawn if change does not occur. Rage is potentially a more useful emotion than fear, because it leads to actions that are less damaging to the development of a sense of power and, hence, of self-esteem. Harnessed rage or outrage can be a powerful energizer for determined action, and if this action is directed toward building one's own power rather than destroying the other's power, the outrage may have a socially constructive outcome.

In any case, it is evident that when intense rage or fear is the dominant emotion, the cooperative message outlined here is largely irrelevant. Both rage and fear are rooted in a sense of helplessness and powerlessness; they are emotions associated with a state of dependency. Those in low power can overcome these debilitating emotions by their own successful action on matters of significance to them. In the current slang, they have to "do their own thing"; it cannot be given to them or done for them. This is why my emphasis is on the sharing of power, and thus increasing one's power to affect one's fate, rather than on the sharing of affluence. While the sharing of affluence is desirable, it is not sufficient. In its most debilitating sense, poverty is a lack of power and not merely a lack of money. Money is, of course, a base for power, but it is not the only one. If one chooses to be poor, as some members of religious or pioneering groups do, the psychological syndrome usually associated with imposed poverty—a mixture of

humiliation, dependency, victimhood, apathy, small time-perspective, suspicion, fear and rage—is not present.

Thus, the ability to offer and engage in authentic cooperation presupposes an awareness that one is neither helpless nor powerless, even though one is at a relative disadvantage. Not only independent action but also cooperative action requires a recognition and confirmation of one's capacity to "go it alone" if necessary. Unless one has the freedom to choose *not* to cooperate, there can be no free choice *to* cooperate. Powerlessness and the associated lack of self- and group esteem are not conducive to either internal group cohesiveness or external cooperation. Power does not, however, necessarily lead to cooperation. This is partly because, in its origin and rhetoric, power of the oppressed group may be oriented against the power of the established and thus likely to intensify the defensiveness of those with high power.

However, even if power is "for" rather than "against," and even if it provides a basis for authentic cooperation, cooperation may not occur because it is of little importance to the high-power group. This group may be unaffected by the positive or negative incentives that the low-power group controls; it does not need their compliance. Universities can obtain new students; the affluent nations no longer are so dependent upon the raw materials produced in the underdeveloped nations; the White industrial society does not need many unskilled Black workers.

Power Strategies

Apart from resigning into depression, what can members of a low-power group do when the dominant group is unwilling to negotiate a change in the status quo? Basically, there is only the possibility of increasing the group's relative power sufficiently to compel the other to negotiate. Relative power is increased by either of two means: enhancing one's own power or decreasing the other's power.

Enhancing One's Own Power

As I have indicated earlier, it involves increasing one's possession of the resources on which power is based and increasing the effectiveness with which the power is used. There are three areas in which those with low power can find additional resources: *within one's self or group*; *within potential allies*; and *within the oppressor*. Nelson Mandela (1994) in his autobiographical book, *Long Walk to Freedom*, provides many illustrations of how he did this even when he was a prisoner of the repressive, apartheid South African government.

Developing Power within One's Self or One's Group

By exerting considerable self-discipline while he was a prisoner, Mandela kept himself in excellent physical and mental condition. He stated that when he

was a prisoner on Robben Island, the notorious prison island (Mandela, 1994, p. 427): "On Monday through Thursday, I would do stationary running in my cell in the morning for up to forty-five minutes. I would also perform one hundred fingertip push-ups, two hundred sit-ups, fifty deep knee-bends and various other calisthenics." He kept himself in good shape mentally by reading widely, by becoming an informed expert on the laws and regulations concerning the treatment of prisoners, and by studying for an L.L.B. degree at the University of London.

And he kept his self concept undistorted by preserving his dignity and refusing to submit, psychologically, to the definition of self that the oppressors tried to force upon him. For example, he described the following incident after landing on Robbens Island (Mandela, 1995, pp. 297–299):

> We were met by a group of burly white wardens shouting: "Dis die Eiland! Hier gaan jiell vrek! (This is the island! Here you will die!). . . As we walked toward the prison, the guards shouted 'Two-two! Two—two!'—meaning we should walk in pairs . . . I linked up with Tefu. The guards started screaming, 'Haas! . . . Haas!' The word haas means 'move' in Afrikaans, but it is commonly reserved for cattle.
>
> The wardens were demanding that we jog, and I turned to Tefu and under my breath said that we must set an example; if we give in now we would be at their mercy. . .
>
> I mentioned to Tefu that we should walk in front, and we took the lead. Once in front, we actually decreased the pace, walking slowly and deliberately. The guards were incredulous (and said). . . we will tolerate no insubordination here. Haas! Haas! But we continued at our stately pace. (The head guard) ordered us to halt and stood in front of us: Look, man, we will kill you, we are not fooling around . . . This the last warning. Haas! Haas!
>
> To this I said: 'You have your duty and we have ours.' I was determined that we would not give in, and we did not, for we were already at the cells.

By his persistent public refusal to be humiliated or to feel humiliated, Mandela rejected the distorted, self-debilitating relationship that the oppressor sought to impose upon him. Doing so enhanced his leadership among his fellow political prisoners and the respect he was accorded by the less sadistic guards and wardens of the prison.

Allies are Very Important

The acquisition of allies is central to enhancing the power of oppressed groups. Leaders of the African National Congress (ANC) of South Africa devoted considerable effort to developing allies among the leaders of other African nations as well as among many other influential groups in the UN, the Commonwealth, and the various industrial nations with economic ties to South Africa. There is little doubt that the allies they developed played a crucial role in bringing about the ending of the apartheid system and the formation of a new government with Nelson Mandela as President and the ANC as the dominant political party. Their allies did this by bringing sufficient economic, political, and moral pressure upon

the apartheid government to convince the economic leaders of the country that a change was necessary if they were to avoid an economic disaster.

Unfortunately, sometimes oppressed groups do not sufficiently realize the important potential for allies among other oppressed groups. They may narrowly define their interests as overcoming the injustices which they are experiencing and are not concerned with those being suffered by other oppressed groups. In the United States, for example, there is not an effective working coalition among such oppressed groups as Blacks, gays, women, Hispanics, the disabled, the poor, and the elderly because these separate groups do not define their interests inclusively. While every group has to be for itself, when it is also for others, it becomes stronger from the support it receives.

The Oppressor's Power Can Often be Used Against the Oppressor by the Oppressed

As Alinsky (1971, p. 152) indicates: "... Since the Haves publicly pose as the custodians of responsibility, morality, law and justice (which are frequently strangers to each other), they can be constantly pushed to live up to their own book of morality and regulations. No organization, including religion, can live up to the letter of its own book."

Alinsky (1971) cites many examples of tactics in which bureaucratic systems were snarled in their own red tape by pressure to live up to their own formally stated rules and procedures. Tactics of this sort may center upon demanding or using a service that one is entitled to, a service that is not ordinarily used so massively and for which the institution is not prepared to provide in large volume without excessive cost to itself. For example, banks may be disrupted by a massive opening and closing of accounts, department stores by massive returns of purchases, airports by a massive use of their toilets and urinals by visitors, and so forth. Or, the tactics may center upon disobedience to a rule or law that cannot be enforced in the face of massive noncompliance. Thus, landlords cannot afford to throw out all tenants who refuse to pay rent in a cohesive rent strike or schools to dismiss all students who disobey an obnoxious school regulation—if the students are united in their opposition.

Related to the tactic of clubbing the haves with their own book of rules and regulation is the tactic of goading them into errors such as violating their own rules or regulations. If they can be provoked into an obvious disruption of their own stated principles, then segments of the high-power group may become disaffected, with the resultant weakening of the haves. In addition, previously neutral third parties may, in response to the violations by those in power, swing their sympathies and support to the have-nots.

In general, it is a mistake to think that a high-power group is completely unified. Most groups have internal divisions and conflict among their most active

members; further, only a small proportion of their members are likely to be active supporters of current policy. The conflicts among those who are active in the high-power groups and the distinction between active and passive members provide important points of leverage for the have-nots. The passive compliance of the inactive majority of the haves may disappear as their leaders are provoked into intemperate errors and as they are subject to ridicule and embarrassment by their inability to cope effectively with the persisting harassments and nuisances caused by the have-nots.

The power of the haves, as is true of any group, depends upon such tangibles as control over the instruments of force, an effective communication system, and an effective transportation system and upon such intangibles as prestige and an aura of invincibility. While a low-power group may not be able to interfere seriously with the tangible bases of power of the haves without engaging in illegal, destructive actions of sabotage, it has many legal means of tarnishing and weakening their intangible sources of power. Ridicule and techniques of embarrassment are most effective weapons for this purpose. Here, as elsewhere, inventiveness and imagination play important roles in devising effective tactics.

Tactics of embarrassment and ridicule include the picketing of such people as slum landlords, key stockholders, and management personnel of recalcitrant firms and other such wielders of power in situations that are embarrassing to them—e.g. at their homes, at their churches, synagogues, or mosques, or at their social clubs. The advantage of such tactics as ridicule and embarrassment is that they are often enjoyable for those in low power and very difficult for those in high power to cope with without further loss of face.

Reducing the Power of the Oppressor

There are three strategies that are used to weaken oppressors: *divide and conquer*, *violence*, and *non-violence*. In prior sections, I have alluded to the "divide and conquer" strategy and my emphasis there was on the recognition that there are often potential allies for the oppressed to be found among the oppressors. Even apart from recruiting allies among the oppressors, there is always the possibility of exploiting or creating divisions within this group. Various techniques can be employed in an attempt to create or increase the antagonism among different factions within the oppressors—e.g., planting rumors; creating incidents; making "offers" that favor one faction over another; and distorting their communication processes to one another in such a way that mistrust and hostility are fostered among the different factions.

Violence

As a strategy, violence has some positive features but, in my view, it has considerably greater negatives. Its positives are that it gets the attention of those

in high power who have previously paid little attention to the oppressed and their needs. Additionally, it may be cathartic and psychologically empowering for those in low-power groups who feel enraged and humiliated by their oppression. Also, if well focused and executed, it may weaken the oppressed group.

Nelson Mandela, at one point became convinced that nonviolent strategies were not being effective against the apartheid South African government, so he advocated that the African National Congress create a separate, secret group (MK), which would engage in violence. In planning the direction and form this group would take, Mandela (1995, pp. 282–283) indicated that:

> We considered four types of violent activities: sabotage, guerilla warfare, terrorism, and open revolution. For a small and fledgling army, open revolution was inconceivable. Terrorism inevitably reflected poorly on those who used it, undermining any public support it might otherwise garner. Guerilla warfare was a possibility, but since the ANC had been reluctant to embrace violence at all, it made sense to start with the form of violence that inflicted the least harm against individuals: sabotage.
>
> Because it did not involve loss of life, it offered the best hope for reconciliation among the races afterward. We did not want to start a blood feud between white and black. Animosity between Afrikaner and Englishman was still sharp fifty years after the Anglo-Boer War; what race relations would be like between white and black if we provoked a civil war? Sabotage had the added virtue of requiring the least manpower.
>
> Our strategy was to make selective forays against military installations, power plants, telephone lines, and transportation links, targets that would not only hamper the military effectiveness of the state, but frighten National Party supporters, scare away foreign capital, and weaken the economy. This we hoped would bring the government to the bargaining table. Strict instructions were given to members of MK that we would countenance no loss of life.

Mandela was undoubtedly wise in advocating that the violence not be directed at people but rather be directed at targets that would impair the government's political, economic, and military capabilities. Violence against people is apt to weaken the support of existing and potential allies, unify the oppressors, and lead to a vicious spiral of increasing irrational violence. The violence is irrational in that it is impelled by a thirst for vengeance rather than by an attempt to achieve strategic objectives. Violence of any sort against a powerful oppressor usually leads to an intensification of oppression rather than an increased readiness to engage in constructive negotiation.

The rare exceptions are when the violence by the oppressed is perceived by both the oppressed and the oppressor, to be part of a rational appeal to the self-interest of the oppressor (i.e., an inevitable cost of refusing to engage in constructive negotiations for a change in the status quo which could be mutually beneficial). And when the oppressor's response to violence is disproportionate, it may have the effect of delegitimizing the oppressor in the eyes of observers as well as in those of the oppressed. If the observers become active allies of the oppressed, as a consequence of the oppressor's disproportionate reactive violence, then the balance of power may shift away from the oppressor to the oppressed.

I conclude that the use of violence by the oppressed against a much stronger oppressor is most likely to worsen its circumstances and, even in the unlikely possibility of a victory over the oppressor, it is apt to produce leadership among the former oppressed that is undemocratic and predisposed to employing violence in its leadership style.

Nonviolence

As a strategy, nonviolence is based on the premise that if we get what we want through violence, we will have created (Holmes, 1990, p. 5) "... a certain amount of harm, pain, injury, death, or destruction... We may in addition have created a climate of fear, distrust, or hatred on the part of those against whom we have used the violence. We may also have contributed to the transformation of ourselves into an insensitive or even cruel persons ... Revolutions, even when they overcome violent resistance ... often end up building the same sorts of abuses their promoters hoped to eliminate, just as wars set the stage for new wars."

In other words, the nonviolence strategy basically seeks to avoid the harmful effects of physical or psychological violence. Most approaches to nonviolence also assume that, in conflict, one should respect one's adversary and that, even one's enemy is entitled to care and justice, to compassion and goodwill.

Gene Sharp (1971), the most influential student of nonviolence, has identified at least 197 methods of nonviolent actions, which he groups into three categories:

(1) *Nonviolent protests* include marches, picketing, vigils, putting up posters, public meetings, and issuing and distributing protest literature. These methods are meant to produce an awareness of dissent and opposition to unjust policies and practices. Their impact can be large if they awaken the sense of injustice in influential potential allies who were not aware of the injustices being experienced.
(2) *Nonviolent noncooperation* include refusal to comply with unfair rules, regulations, or orders, social or economic boycotts, boycotts of elections, general strikes, strikes, go-slow actions, rigid enforcement of rules, political jujitsu, civil disobedience, mutiny. These methods are meant to disrupt the normal efficiency and functioning of the system controlled by the oppressor to indicate that the oppressed will no longer cooperate in their oppression.
(3) *Nonviolent interventions* include sit-ins; nonviolent obstructions of communication facilities, traffic, banks, public toilet facilities, etc.; nonviolent invasions and occupancy; and creation of a parallel government. These methods are most coercive and disruptive of the functioning of the

system and are most apt to produce a violent counter-response from those in power.

The use of nonviolent methods requires considerable self-discipline and courage. Systematic training of neophytes in the use of such methods by experienced practitioners makes their implementation more skillful and less dangerous. Training often involves role-playing and rehearsal of the appropriate actions to take in some of the typically difficult and dangerous situations that the non-violent participants may face as they engage in marches, refusals to comply with regulations, strikes, sit-ins, obstruction of traffic, or other nonviolent methods.

There have been no systematic research of which I am aware that attempts to determine the conditions under which nonviolent methods are likely to succeed or fail. There have been many instances of success as well of failure and it is an area ripe for study (see Powers *et al*., 1997, for many case studies of nonviolent action). Based upon my very limited knowledge of these instances, I would hypothesize that nonviolent actions are most effective: when they are contesting clear and gross injustices; when they are well-publicized; when they are successful in recruiting others who are oppressed as well as allies among those who are not; and when they occur in a state that is reluctant to employ overwhelming force to repress the nonviolent actions. In a state that controls the media and is repressive, success is unlikely unless the nonviolent actors are able to recruit the employees of the media and members of the police and armed forces to their side. In other words, nonviolent actors are likely to be most successful in democratic societies where repressive force against them is likely to be relatively moderate and is apt to receive widespread, unfavorable publicity and to recruit allies to their cause. Thus, in the United States, the nonviolent civil rights movement was successful partly due to the widespread revulsion against the well-publicized violence used against them by public officials in the South. However, even in autocratically controlled states—such as apartheid South Africa, the Marcos government in the Philippines, the Shah's government in Iran, the Milosovic government in Serbia, nonviolence was successful in overthrowing the governments because they were able to enlist the media and members of the armed forces to be against the repression of those seeking change of their oppressive, corrupt government.

Throughout much of the preceding discussion, I have emphasized the importance, for low-power groups to use strategies and tactics which would develop allies among the high-power groups, among other low-power groups, and among third parties. Through their actions and resources, allies can play a vital role in not only awakening the sense of injustice in the oppressors but also by increasing the bargaining power of the oppressed. Additionally, they often can facilitate a constructive, nonviolent process of conflict resolution and social change through the procedures and resources they make available to foster and maintain such a process.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

I conclude by stating that my objective in this article was to provide a generalized framework for characterizing oppression and the forms it take, as well as to consider what keeps it in place, and how it can be overcome. I hope that this framework can be usefully applied to understand and change oppressive relations between specific groups such as those between men and women, the rich and the poor, managers and workers, parents and children, and between different racial, religious, and ethnic groups.

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